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## W. Beaumont's notes on science, nature, philosophy, and truth. Undated

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10 ~~The~~ The lowest axioms differ but little from bare experiment, the higher & most general (as they are esteemed at present) are notional & abstract & of no real weight.  
B.

11 In proportion to a man's wit & zeal, does he, if he desert the light & observation of nature and the evidence of particulars, plunge himself and become involved in the darkest and most intricate recesses, and, as it were, dens of faeries & idols.  
B.

12 The same (as they say) in the fable outstrip the Swift who wander from it, and it is clear that the very skill and swiftness of him who runs not in the right direction, must increase his delusion.  
B.

13 We must not then add wings, but rather lead and ballast to the understanding, to prevent its jumping or flying, which has not yet been done.  
B.



7 The apotheosis of Error is the  
greatest evil of all, and when  
fully worshipped it is, as it were,  
a plague-spot upon the Understanding.  
B

#66 Man, ~~as~~ the minister & interpreter  
of Nature does, and understands, as  
much as he has observed of the order,  
operation, and mind of nature;  
and neither knows nor is able to  
do more. Neither is it possible  
for any power to loosen or  
burst the chain of causes, nor  
is Nature to be overcome except  
by submission [to its laws]  
B

14 And if we have made any way  
in this matter, no other method than  
the true and genuine humiliation  
of the human soul hath opened it  
unto us. For all who before us  
have applied themselves to the  
discovery of the arts, after casting  
their eyes awhile upon things,  
instances and experiences, have



straightway invoked, as it were,  
some spirits of their own to disclose  
their oracles, as if invention were  
nothing but a species of thought.  
B.

8. ~~The~~ [Truth] we consider rather  
the gift of fortune than of any  
extraordinary talent, and as the  
offspring of time rather than wit  
B.

9. Those who have treated of the Sciences  
have been either empirics or dogmatical.  
The former like ants only heap up  
and use their store, the latter like  
spiders spin out their own webs.  
The bee, a mean between both, extracts  
matter from the flowers of the garden  
and the field, but works and  
fashions it by its own efforts.  
(Or "transmutes it by a faculty of its own") B.

(+5) There is no other entrance open to the  
kingdom of nature than to the kingdom of  
heaven, into which no one may enter  
except in the form of a little child.  
B.



The paths of thought and understanding  
 almost agree with that two-fold way  
 in morals, sung by the ancients; [Matthew  
 7. 13.] for one road, smooth at  
 the entrance, leads to pathless wilds,  
 the other, steep and difficult at first,  
 ends in a level road. B.

The beginning - and the end.

"What must I teach thee the first thing?"  
 Off my own shadow <sup>how</sup> to spring.

G.